

So I ask and urge my colleagues to be as outraged as we are in Florida. This was murder of three citizens. This was murder, a trial of 3 days, an appeal of 24 hours and a firing squad a day later.

This is the Nation we want to do business with? This is the Nation we want to trade with? This is a person my colleagues want to ship goods and medicine to? Prop up his regime? I think not.

HONORING WEST POINT CLASSMATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I take this 5 minutes to talk about an historical trend in this country that ties together those who have come before us in the past and those who are serving today, and I speak about the long gray line and those individuals who have served at West Point.

Many of us know that West Point celebrated its 200th anniversary last year, 200th anniversary of creating leaders of character to serve in our Nation and that commitment by this country to have a professional military institution that helps train leaders of character to lead our young men and women into battle but also understands how to deal with the current civil military operations that are occurring is a great credit to this country and one that we need to remember.

Many of us know the great names of Lee and Grant and Eisenhower and Patton, MacArthur, those who have gone there before, but I want to brag, if I may, about my classmates, graduates of the class of 1980 who are serving so admirably currently now in Iraq. They probably would not like me to be doing this, but I take this opportunity as a Member of Congress to speak in pride about my classmates.

I brought down my graduation yearbook, and although many of my colleagues cannot see it, I turn to a page and a familiar picture for those of us who have been following the briefings. We have a young Vince Brooks, first captain of the class of 1980. Yes, it is the same Vince Brooks who is giving the briefings over in Qatar on a daily basis talking about our command.

The line of my classmates is long and very grand in their services, and I want to recognize them all here.

Lieutenant Colonel (promotable) John Agoglia, J5 Plans CENTCOM; Colonel (promotable) Chuck Anderson, Chief of Staff, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command. I mentioned Brigadier General Vince Brooks, Deputy for Operations and Coalition spokesman. Colonel Dave Brown, G3 section, V Corp, Iraq; Lieutenant Colonel Curt Cheeseman, J5 Plans, CENTCOM; Colonel Perry Clawson, Commander of the 1186th Transportation Terminal Brigade; John Davis, who is in the CENTCOM area of oper-

ation; Pat Donahue; Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Dow, HQ, Stateside; Lieutenant Colonel Bill Duffy, Commander, Task Force 513 Military Intelligence.

I want to pause here to say that many of my classmates are active duty and have served now over 20 years. Many of them are serving continually as reservists or members of the National Guard. We cannot tell the difference when I read this list because of the one Army philosophy that joins Active, Reserve and Guardsmen.

Lieutenant Colonel Dale Egger, Commander of 3rd Battalion, 289th Training Support Brigade, Stateside; Jim Embrey, in Kuwait; Colonel Mark Eshelman, 3rd Army, CENTCOM; Lieutenant Colonel T.J. Farrell, Force Protection Officer, 143rd TRANSCOM in Kuwait; Colonel Tim Glaeser, Commander, 11th ADA Brigade, Kuwait; Major Curt Grayer, Deputy Commander, 310th Personnel Support Group; Lieutenant Colonel Vern Green, Commander, 1181st Transportation Terminal Battalion; Colonel Ben Hodges, Commander, 1st Battalion, 101st Airborne Division; Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hudson, assignment undisclosed, 5th Special Forces Group, somewhere in the area of operation; Lieutenant Colonel Doug Lobdell, commander, 361st Training Support Brigade; Lieutenant Colonel Jan Kozlowski, C7 engineer, Kuwait; Lieutenant Colonel Mark Kucera, Forward Engineer Support Team; Colonel Mike Linnington, Commander, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division; Colonel Dave MacLean, J5-E, CENTCOM; Colonel Steve Mains, Chief, JFCOM J9, Lessons Learned Team, CENTCOM; Dr. Major Kathy Mathews, who is the wife of one of my classmates, Johnny Ham, who is a brigade surgeon in the 108th Brigade; Lieutenant Colonel Tom Miller, Civil Affairs Officer, en route to CENTCOM; Lieutenant Colonel Paul Oettinger, Commander of the 195th Contract Support Detachment, Kuwait; Colonel John Peabody, Commander, 3rd Infantry Division; Colonel Dave Perkins, Commander, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Baghdad, Iraq; Colonel Tony Puckett, J5, Kuwait; Lieutenant Colonel Willie Ramos, Commander, 345th Rear Area Operations Center; CW3 Kathy Silvia, en route to CENTCOM; Colonel (promotable) Joe Votel, Commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, location undisclosed; Kurt Westerman, en route to CENTCOM.

I am very proud of our classmates and those who are helping to support them here at home.

The West Point Alma Mater reads like this. Actually it is a song, and it is appropriate.

Hail, Alma Mater dear,
To us be ever near,
Help us thy motto bear
Through all the years,
Let Duty be well performed,
Honor be e'er untarned,
Country be ever armed,
West Point, by thee.

Guide us, thy sons, aright,
Teach us by day, by night,

To keep thine honor bright,
For thee to fight.
When we depart from thee,
Serving on land or sea,
May we still loyal be,
West Point, to thee.

And when our work is done,
Our course on earth is run,
May it be said, "Well done;
Be thou at peace."
E'er may that line of gray
Increase from day to day,
Live, serve and die, we pray,
West Point, for thee.

I am tremendously proud of my classmates who are serving in the area of operation and throughout the world. They have done great credit to this country, this Nation, the people of Iraq and our alma mater West Point. Their names will be etched in history with those who have served honorably and distinctively in service to their country.

May God bless them all and may God bless the United States of America.

NATIONAL FORMER PRISONER OF WAR RECOGNITION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women in uniform continue to risk their lives at this hour in Iraq, and let there be no mistake: there cause is noble.

They are disarming and deposing a ruthless tyrant who has brutalized the Iraqi people for more than 20 years, and who has threatened the security of the Middle East region and the world.

As the result of the courage, sacrifice, patriotism and professionalism of our American Armed Forces—as well as our Coalition allies—the Iraqi people have broken free of Hussein's stranglehold.

Who could not be moved by the scenes broadcast from Baghdad, where thousands of newly liberated Iraqi citizens celebrated Hussein's defeat?

However, danger still lurks around every corner. Thus, we pray for a successful conclusion to this war and our troops' safe return.

We also pray for the loved ones and families of the American servicemen and servicewomen who will not be returning safely to our shores; those who have given their lives for their Nation and the cause of freedom.

And we say a special prayer for the seven Americans who are listed as prisoners of war and eight who are listed as missing.

As we come to this House floor to commemorate national former POW Recognition Day, which was observed this past Wednesday, April 9, let us join together and offer this solemn pledge: the United States of America shall never—never—rest until every single American who is believed to be in enemy hands is freed, and every single American who is missing is fully accounted for.

Freedom's defenders must never be forgotten, and thus our mission in Iraq is far from accomplished.

Our former prisoners of war are national heroes who deserve our gratitude and respect.

Their service placed them in dangerous circumstances, causing their capture and imprisonment, often in atrocious conditions.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to their families for weathering agonizing uncertainty while demonstrating support for their loved ones' service to our country.

Although former POWs returned home, too often they carried the extra burden of physical and emotional scares.

They are a testament to history's eternal truth—freedom is not free—as well as its unforgiving lesson: the price of freedom is always great.

We remember these courageous heroes in the shadow of the dramatic rescue of Pfc Jessica Lynch on April 2.

She owes her life to the American commandos who stormed the hospital where she was being held and rescued her, as well as the brave Iraqi man who risked certain death by providing our troops with accurate information regarding her whereabouts.

We recognize the tremendous sacrifice of former prisoners of war like Jessica, and we pledge that our Nation will keep its promises to all former POWs and veterans.

Let me close, however, by saying that even as our servicemen and women are overseas defending our values, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, there are schemes afoot in this very Capitol to give them short shrift once they return home.

While President Bush has extended his appreciation to members of veterans service organizations for "the lifetime of service you have given to our Nation," some have proposed cutting veterans' benefits and health care by more than \$28 billion to help pay for a tax cut.

This is not only bad policy, it is, in my view, immoral.

This Nation, as far as I am concerned, has an irrevocable contract with America's veterans. And it is one that we must always honor.

Our veterans and former POWs deserve more than medals and a thank you for their service and sacrifice.

At a time when we are sending thousands of America's sons and daughters into harm's way, we should be investing in the programs and services our veterans and former prisoners of war deserve, not pulling back on our promises.

We must stand behind our words of gratitude by honoring the commitment we made to them for answering freedom's call.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to be here today to address the situation of former American POWs.

In this time of war, it is especially important to recognize April 9 as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day.

While the plight of courageous soldiers such as Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who had been captured with 11 other U.S. soldiers from the 507th Maintenance Company, brings the concern of POWs to the forefront of our minds today, I would like to address my concerns for a group of POWs from a previous war, the war from which this important date of April 9 was chosen.

I am speaking of those who fought in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

I would especially like to talk about one former POW, Dr. Lester Tenney. Dr. Tenney's

story mirrors what many of our WWII POWs in the Pacific went through.

Mr. Tenney became a prisoner of war on April 9, 1942, with the fall of Bataan in the Philippines. A survivor of the Bataan death march, he was sent in a "hell ship" to Japan, where he became part of the slave labor force in a Mitsui company coal mine.

Dr. Tenney has stated, and I quote, "I was forced to shovel coal 12 hours a day, 28 days a month, for over 2 years, the reward I received for this hard labor was beatings by the civilian workers in the mine. And if I did not work fast enough or if the Americans had won an important battle the beatings would be that much more severe."

These POWs who survived the Bataan death march only to be transported to Japan in the infamous death ships and forced to work for private Japanese companies under the most horrendous conditions are the true heroes of our Nation.

After the war, approximately 16,000 POWs returned—all battered and nearly starved to death, many permanently disabled, all changed forever. More than 11,000 POWs died in the hands of Japanese, among the worst records of physical abuse of POWs in recorded history.

Now, like many other victims of World War II-era atrocities, the remaining survivors and the estates of those who have since passed away are seeking justice and historical recognition of their ordeal.

The former POWs do not seek any action or retaliation against the current Japanese Government or against the Japanese people. Nor do they seek to portray Asian-Americans in any sort of negative light.

Rather, they simply seek just compensation from the Japanese companies who were unjustly enriched by their slave labor and sufferings.

I am honored to stand here in the House of Representatives, to let these men know that I will work with my colleagues to see that there is justice done in their situation.

We must never forget, these are the men of our Nation's greatest generation. They volunteered to serve our country, some only 17 or 18 years old at the time.

They survived the ordeal of a forced surrender in the Philippines, they survived the cruelties of the Bataan death march, they survived the hell ships, they survived being POWs in Japan and the tortures of slavery.

For the sake of the past, for the sake of these men today, and the sake of our future, we must do right for these men.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to address the House floor this evening on this very important matter.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleagues, the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. HOYER, and the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. SKELTON, in solemn observance of National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day.

At this hour, thousands of brave young Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States are carrying out a dangerous yet necessary mission in Iraq. Like many Americans, I hoped and prayed for a diplomatic settlement to the crisis posed by Saddam Hussein's refusal to disarm. Unfortunately, 12 years of diplomacy did not produce the desired result. With all other options exhausted, we were forced to proceed with the action that should

always be reserved for last—the use of military force.

Our troops have heroically responded to this call to arms with unyielding courage, devastating efficiency, and unparalleled concern for the safety and well being of countless thousands of Iraqi civilians. I continue to pray for a swift end to this conflict, and to hope that our military personnel will come home soon and safely, having liberated the citizens of Iraq from the nightmare they have endured for a quarter of a century.

Despite the unprecedented success of our military forces, Mr. Speaker, scores of American families have already had to come to terms with the horrible and irrevocable reality of war. Nearly 100 brave soldiers have been killed in action. They were mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers and lifelong friends, and my heart goes out to all those who loved them.

My family knows the pain of war. On August 9, 1970, my brother, H.M. 3 William F. McNulty, a medical corpsman in the Navy, was in the field in Quang Nam province, patching up his buddies. He stepped on a land mine and he lost his life.

But his body was recovered. And he was brought back home, and we had a wake and a funeral and a burial. Our family suffered a tremendous loss, our small village of Green Island, New York, suffered a tremendous loss—but we had some closure.

Mr. Speaker, the families of seven American servicemen and women currently listed as prisoners of war, and the families of eleven soldiers listed as duty status unknown, or missing in action may never enjoy this sense of closure. Just ask the families of the 1,887 Americans still missing and unaccounted for from the war in Vietnam.

I have always wondered how terrible it must be for an MIA family, never exactly knowing what happened to their loved one—not for a day, a week, a month or a year, but for decades.

Every once in a while, this profound sense of frustration and loss is interspersed with joyous news of rescue and heroism. By now, we are all familiar with the story of Pfc. Jessica Lynch. Pfc. Lynch was captured with 11 other American soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company but was later rescued from a hospital in Iraq on April 2, due in no small part to the superior skill and preparedness of our Special Forces, as well as the courage and humanity of an Iraqi civilian who risked his own life, and the lives of his family, by walking 6 miles to inform coalition forces of Pfc. Lynch's location. Thanks to these efforts, Pfc. Lynch escaped further torture and abuse at the hands of Iraqi forces, and lays tonight in an American military hospital in Germany, enjoying the company of her family.

Mr. Speaker, we pay tribute tonight to courageous American heroes like Pfc. Lynch. She and so many other former prisoners of war suffered through the atrocious conditions of capture and internment, sacrificing so much of their freedom in defense of the citizens of this nation and the world.

In the name of all former POWs, I pledge to continue to work to ensure that future generations understand the courage of these heroes, and that our government follows through on all promises made to former POWs—and all veterans.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our esteemed whip, Mr. HOYER,

and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON, for organizing this time to reflect on those who have sacrificed so much for this country.

Those members of our military who are still prisoners of war or are missing in action have made the ultimate sacrifice without the opportunity to return home.

We can only hope that those young men and women who have been taken captive in the current conflict will be treated humanely and returned home to us soon.

Mr. Speaker, there is one former POW I would like to single out, current Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan. He entered the United States Navy in 1969 and served as a naval flight officer aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk*.

In May of 1972, Lt. Joe Kernan was shot down by the enemy while on a reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. He was held as a prisoner of war for nearly 11 months.

Joe Kernan was repatriated in 1973 as part of the last convoy of prisoners of war exchanged that ended the war, and continued on active duty with the Navy until December of 1974. For his service, Kernan received numerous awards, including the Navy Commendation Medal, two Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He never forgets May 7, "the day I was shot down."

It was his 26th mission. He was in the rear seat of an RA-5C Vigilante reconnaissance jet, on a picture-snapping mission to assess bomb damage. They raced along at 650 mph, 80 miles south of Hanoi, then navigated down Highway 1 to take photos of traffic.

They were relatively low—4,500 feet high, compared with the 35,000-foot altitude a B-52 bomber would fly—when anti-aircraft fire hit the plane's tail.

"The nose pitched down very violently," he said, and the pilot tried to make it to the potential safety of the U.S.-controlled Gulf of Tonkin. The jet couldn't make it. Kernan ejected, followed closely by the pilot.

"I blacked out on the ejection," Kernan said.

"I landed in somebody's front yard on a beautiful Sunday afternoon," he recalled. "When I woke up, I found myself on the edge of a group of people, surrounding me, watching me get up, with people coming at me from everywhere."

March 27 marked the 30th anniversary of his release from captivity. When looking back on his time in captivity, he minimizes the details of his treatment there, saying the end of the war was not as bad as the beginning.

"What you rely on is your faith, your family, your desire to see them again, your will to survive and the knowledge that you're not going to be left behind. We won't go home without them. That has been a commitment made to everyone who wears the uniform, and it will be honored," Kernan said.

We remember those who are still fighting the past wars, those who have not had the chance to come home to the families.

I ask unanimous consent to place in the RECORD the names of those who have not had the chance to come home from the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

KOREAN WAR POW/MIA—INDIANA

Floyd Neal Acton, James Dwight Adams, Herbert D. Akers, George Anspaugh, Robert

Gene Archer, David Baker, Donald Lewis Baker, Donald Lee Barker, Lester William Bauer, Robert Allen Beard, Milton Marion Beed, Lowell W. Bellar, Victor Vernon Bender, A.D. Berry, Charles F. Binge, William Stanley Blasdel, William J. Bowerman, Allen Milford Bowman, Eldon R. Bradley, Kenneth Wilber Brock, Kenneth Brown, Thomas James Brown, Hugh Maynard Burch, Forrest S. Burns, Billie Jack Byard, Donald Caddell, Stanley Louis Calhoun, Jr., George R. Chadwell, Richard A. Chappel, Gene Franklin Clark, Harold Robert Clark, Clyde R. Clifford, James Allen Coleman, Louis Bernard Conde, Jack Dwayne Conrad, Richard Leon Conrad, James L. Constant, Folton Cosby, John Harold Cowger, Clarence Vernon Cox, Jr., Kenneth Lee Cozad, George Eldon Cranor.

Reed A. Criswell, William R. Cunningham, Kenneth Horton Dally, Howard Dale Dalton, Ezekiel Alfonso Davis, Jack A. Davis, Norman Glen Davis, George Debaun, Jr., Hobart Decker, Raymond Alfred Decker, Clayton C. Delong, Gene Alton Dennis, Stanley L. Dewitt, William L. Dick, Jr., Milton J. Dinerboiler, James Thomas Doody, Donald D. Drew, James R. Dunn, Joseph Durakovich, Donald Wayne Eads, John Omer Eaton, Herbert Phillip Eggers, Howard W. Emrick, William Chester Enright, Robert Vernon Estes, Don Carlos Faith, Jr., Robert Clarence Finch, Peter Paul Fluhr, Jr., Edward Leo Frakes, Ned Charles Frankart, Jack Marvin Frans, George Arthur Frantz, Charles Garrigus, Clifton E. Gibson, Willard M. Gibson, Clyde Goe, Robert Goodall, Joseph P. Greene, Jack Walter Griffith, Edward Allen Gude, John Edwin Guynn, Donald Sewell Hamilton.

Donald Lane Hamm, Keith Edward Hammon, Gilbert Larry Harmon, Elmer Harris, Jr., Max Eugene Harris, Bannie Harrison, Jr., Gene N. Hatch, Kenneth Verne Hay, Leo Joseph Henkenius, James Fella Hill, Robert Lee Hinds, William M. Hodge, Joseph Francis Holle, Charles Rutherford Holman, Floyd E. Hooper, Ralph Ernest Hubartt, Jr., Paul F. Hukill, Richard George Inman, Edward R. Jaynes, William F. Jester, William R. Jester, Leonard W.E. Jinks, Cornelius A. Jochim, William H. Johnson, Paul Martin Killar, Lawrence Edward Lander, Robert Warren Langwell, Everett W. Leffler, Harry H. Liddle, Jr., Larry Loveless, Earl Paul Lykins, Delbert Ulysses Mace, Donald F. Mangus, Everett D. Manion, Donald Lee Marlatt, Albert F. Martin, Herbert O. Martin, Steve A. Mastabayvo, Earl E. McClain, Charles H. Mcdaniel, Raymond John Mcdaniel, Edward Q. Mcfarren, James T. McIntyre, Herbert V. Mckeehan, Joseph Lawrence Mcanally,

Morris Meshulam, R. Maurice Metzcar, Melvin J. Michaels, Harry Richard Middleton, Robert G. Minniear, James E. Mishler, Donald K. Mitchell, John D. Moore, Jr., Clarence Taylor Morris, David Wesley Morris, Russell F. Morris, Richard Everett Mullett, Jackie Lee Murdock, Donald William Myers, Thomas W. Neiswinger, Richard L. Nicholson, Charles Northcutt, Jr., Richard Lee Olcott, Raymond Edward Pearson, Virgil L. Phillips, Russell B. Pickens, Lewis Peifer Pleiss, James Plump, Bobby Lee Pothast, Bernard Clayton Reynolds, Donald Ray Rice, Alexander David Rider, Charles D. Riley, Marvin L. Rodman, Edward F. Ross, Robert Lewis Ross, Gene Robert Ruby, John Earl Rush, Marle D. Scott, Richard Dale Scott, Donald R. Sechman, Clifford Gene Selman, Luther Dean Serwise, Gerald Ivin Shepler, Wallace Simmons, Jr., Charles Edward Sizemore, Charles E. Smith, Leland Ford Smith, Marvin W. Soderstrom, Donald E. Spangler,

Alvin Lowell Stebbens, Paul P. Strawser, Charles Sturdivant, Gene Alfred Sturgeon,

Harold Paul Suber, Edwin Felix Tabaszynski, James Willis Talley, John Edward Thurman, Robert Eli Titus, William Wilber Toops, Robert Jerome Tucker, Robert William Turner, Gene Lewis Wagner, Richard L. Wasiak, Robert Lee White, Robert Louis White, Robert Dewitt Wilder, Grover Lois Williams, Merble Eugene Wilson, John George Wolung, Bernard M. Zekucia,

VIETNAM WAR POW/MIA—INDIANA

William W. Bancroft, Jr., Charles Elberg Beals, Quentin Rippetoe Beecher, Stephen Eugene Briener, Harry Franklin Carver, Charles Dennis Chomel, Lawrence Clark, Thomas D. Clem, Kenneth Lloyd Crody, Gene Edmond Davis, Phillip Allen Ducat, Dean Arnold Duvall, George Curtis Green, Jr., Ralph L. Harper, Steven W. Heitman, John Wayne Held, Samuel Eugene Hewitt, John Russell Hills, Donald Russell Hoskins, George A. Howes, Paul F. Johns, James Reed Johnson, Grayland Jones, Karl E. Klute, Charles Allen Knochel, Robert J. Kuhlman, Jr., Bennie Richard Lambton, Michael Lautzenheiser, Karl Wade Lawson, Charles W. Lindewald, James Michael Lyon, Robert L. Mann, Jerry Dean Martin, James Maurice McGarvey, Francis B. Midnight, Harry E. Mitchell, Ronald Wayne Montgomery, Ralph Edward Moore, John M. Nash, William L. Nellans, Larry Stephen Newburn, Thomas Aquinas Parker, Russell Arden Poor, George Ray Posey, Billy L. Rogers, Charles Edward Rogers, Charles David Schoonover, Ronald Eugene Smith, Ronald P. Soucy, Sr., Bruce Wayne Staehli, Kenneth A. Stonebraker, John F. Stuart, John Steiner Stuckey, Jr., Donald Joseph Trampski, Raymond Anthony Wagner, Junior Lee Whittle, Thomas T. Wright, Robin Ray Yeakley, Jeffrey Jerome Young.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that I frequently take time in this chamber to salute the men and women of our nation's armed forces who serve America so well. Today, I am proud to join my colleagues in this special order to express gratitude to a special category of U.S. veterans on National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day.

While the men and women of our Armed Forces may expect to experience some hardships during their service to our country—perhaps in boot camp, or in time away from home and family, or even in combat—our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who have been captured and held as prisoners of war have experienced hardships we can barely imagine and frequently even they cannot bear to share with anyone.

Last year, our former colleague from Florida Representative Karen Thurman hosted a briefing with two survivors of World War II's Bataan death march and the Japanese prisoner of war camps. They came to Washington to discuss their war experiences with Members and with staff. It is no exaggeration to say that after hearing their testimony and other similar accounts, it is simply a wonder and a miracle they survived. A majority of their comrades in arms did not.

One of the veterans said that although more than 50 years have passed, it was only in the last several years that he had even told his wife about the horrors he and his fellow soldiers suffered. After the war, I am told, many of the heroic Americans who made it through unspeakable suffering were encouraged not to tell anyone about their prisoner of war status. If this is true, and I have no real reason to doubt it, that in itself is shameful and I am so glad we can put that sentiment to rest by honoring and recognizing our former POWs today.

Proclamations declaring National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day happen every year, but this year it is particularly meaningful as we remember those from past conflicts and also focus on those service members who are currently engaged in the war in Iraq. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of our coalition forces and their families, particularly those who may have lost a loved one or whose family member or friend has been listed as missing or as a POW. Many families throughout the United States are having to call upon reserves of strength to get through this difficult time, but they should never forget that the entire nation shares their hope for the future, their joy in times of good news, and if need be, their grief in loss.

In recent days, the harrowing accounts told by Americans who were held by the Iraqis during the 1991 Gulf War have raised fears that the men and women who are missing today may suffer similarly criminal treatment. The evidence that we have so far indicates that this is the case. I am very concerned, as I am sure my colleagues are concerned, that we must do everything in our power to ensure that those who have committed war crimes are brought to justice.

Last Friday, the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing to examine the international law regulating the treatment of prisoners of war. Yesterday, House Armed Services Committee Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and I sent a letter to the President suggesting that post-World War II's Nuremberg trials be used as a framework to convene an international military tribunal for the prosecution of war crimes committed during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Just as the Nuremberg trials were conducted by the four nations who won that war—the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—so, too, could a tribunal resulting from this war be conducted by the principal coalition partners: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, and Kuwait. Whatever system is put in place, justice will be our priority.

Without a doubt, we live in a special country. Americans have a spirit of idealism that cannot be broken, and our citizens strive to serve our country however possible. This spirit is evident throughout our nation, but also in the U.S. Congress, where several former POWs serve with distinction. Congressman SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona, and former Congressman Pete Peterson of Florida could have very easily and justifiably returned home from Vietnam and devoted their lives to things other than government service. But they chose to continue their contribution by participating in electoral politics and doing the work that makes our American democracy a success. Their stories, as young men in uniform and in their later careers, inspire us all.

On this National Former POWs Recognition Day, we honor and express our gratitude to all former prisoners of war, whether they served during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, or the current Iraq War. There is absolutely nothing we can do to make up for the sacrifices our service members and their families endured during their captivity in enemy hands. But as a nation, we can, and we must, thank them for their willingness to pay the price required to ensure America's freedoms. In the Congress, we must also be vigilant to ensure that our nation

follows through on the promises we have made to our veterans and former POWs. As fellow citizens, it is the least we can do to begin to repay the debt that we owe them for their service to the American people.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former prisoners of war, and to thank them for their bravery and dedication to our nation.

The United States military has no equal. Our servicemen and women are the best-trained and are the best-prepared to accomplish successfully their missions. However, as the war in Iraq has reminded us, we cannot always prevent the worst from happening.

The conditions for POWs, more often than not, are too difficult and too painful to imagine. I can only imagine the worry and the uncertainty that their families must feel each day until their loved one is brought home. The rescue of Jessica Lynch showed not only the commitment of our troops to finding their fellow servicemembers, but the bravery of Lynch herself, who stayed strong and focused.

Throughout history, America's military men and women have traveled around the world to fight for the causes of freedom and democracy. In this selfless pursuit, they knew that the battle would not always be easy. We owe them all an enormous debt of gratitude.

We cannot forget our veterans who helped to make this country what it is today and who have brought peace to other nations across the globe. Our nation's fighting men and women are currently engaged in a military conflict in Iraq. While they fight bravely for the principles upon which the United States was founded, we at home cannot turn our backs on veterans who deserve to have access to the benefits that they deserve.

Today, we recognize National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I believe that each day we should remember these brave individuals, and the sacrifices that they made for all of us.

Thank you.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1846

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR) at 6 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) entitled "Concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to announce that pursuant to rule XXVII, as a result of the adoption by the House and the Senate of the conference report on House Concurrent Resolution 95, House Joint Resolution 51, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt, has been engrossed and is deemed to have passed the House on April 11, 2003.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEFAZIO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 3:00 p.m. on account of schedule and district work period.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending a memorial service for the soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company who were killed in Iraq.

Mr. BOYD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today from 1:00 p.m. through the district work period on account of official business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. STENHOLM) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. STENHOLM, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today. (The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's